The MERRY WIDOW

The "MERRY WIDOW"

An Erich von Stroheim Production

FEATURING

MAE MURRAY
as the Widow

JOHN GILBERT
as the Prince

¶ *Screen adaption and scenario by Erich von Stroheim and Benjamin Glazer*

¶ *Based on the Henry W. Savage stage success by Franz Lehar, Victor Leon and Leo Stein*

Directed by
ERICH von STROHEIM

Photography by
OLIVER MARSH

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer PICTURE

Price 25 Cents

"The Merry Widow"

Cast

Sally (Later the Merry Widow) ..... MAE MURRAY
Prince Danilo ..... JOHN GILBERT

Crown Prince ..... *Roy D'Arcy*
Queen Milena ..... *Josephine Crowell*
King Nikita ..... *George Fawcett*
Baron Sadoja ..... *Tully Marshall*
Danilo's Adjutant ..... *Count Conti*
Danilo's Footman ..... *Sidney Bracy*
Crown Prince's Adjutant ..... *Don Ryan*
Innkeeper ..... *Hughie Mack*
Innkeeper's Wife ..... *Ida Moore*
Innkeeper's Daughter ..... *Lucille Van Lent*
Floe Epstein ..... *Charles Margelis*
Jimmy Watson ..... *Harvey Karels*
Dopey Marie ..... *Edna Tichenor*
Hard Boiled Virginia ..... *Gertrude Bennett*
Frenchie Christine ..... *Zalla Zarana*
Madonna ..... *Jacquelin Gadsdon*
French Barber ..... *Estelle Clark*
Horatio ..... *D'Arcy Corrigan*
Hansen Sisters ..... *Clara Wallucks*
Frances Primm
George Washington White ..... *Zack Williams*
Chorus Girls ..... *Louise Hughes*, *Anna Maynard*, *Helen Beaumont*, *Beatrice O'Brien*
Francois ..... *Eugene Pouget*
Ambassador ..... *Edward Connelly*
Ambassador's Wife ..... *Meriwyn Thayer*
Doortender at Francois' ..... *George Nichols*
Sally's Maid ..... *Dale Fuller*
Sadoja's Lackey ..... *Lon Poff*

Silent Music

"Though all the bards of earth were dead,
And all their music passed away,
What Nature wishes should be said
She'll find a rightful voice to say."

—William Winter.

SAD you, less than fifteen years ago, suggested to the man in the street the possibility of transplanting an operetta or a musical comedy to the motion pictures—he might have laughed at you, and in all probability recommended a mental examination.

And even less than two years ago there were some who still held that the hiatus between ear and eye entertainment was something of the millenium; that it was contrary to the laws of nature to attempt to bring an art designed for the ear into a newer art designed solely for the eye.

The contradictory challenge now is: Well, what of the Lehar-Leon-Stein operetta, "The Merry Widow," which Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has not only picturized, but with it has apparently reached out toward the revolutionary?

We are not confronted with any fifteen-year milleniums from now on, to be sure, yet it cannot be denied that to add music to cineplastics, the movies (that *enfant terrible* of the arts), is indeed worthy of note.

There is a oneness of art that cannot be denied. It has been said of architecture that it is frozen music. It is not, therefore, reasonable to assume, from the finest architectural effects achieved by the best motion pictures, that it is possible to endow them with music in that way alone?

Then how much should be said for a motion picture that succeeds in combining a lilting musical show of yesteryear with the cineplastic art?

Of course, one does not actually hear the music of "The Merry Widow." It does not emanate from the screen to be heard by the ear. It is there nevertheless. It is there to all who are sensitive to the arts of motion (eurythmy), painting (it is partly done in Technicolors) and architecture. It is silent music indeed!

And for those whose ear-drums must be vibrated by the material tunes in order to appreciate "The Merry Widow"—nearly every motion picture theatre is well equipped with musical instruments that can play the original Lehar score as the lovable plot is enacted on the screen.

But they have brought "The Merry Widow" —an operetta!—to the screen. And that is all that matters to those of us who want more than one branch of art with our entertainment. And who doesn't?

MAE MURRAY

"The Merry Widow"

PORTSMOUTH, Va., takes as much pride unto itself as New York. It may not have the largest skyscrapers and a population of seven millions, but it is the birthplace of Mae Murray, who from now on is fated to be remembered as "The Merry Widow."

One should dread to think how much would have been lost to the entertainment world if Miss Murray had not been brought to New York at the age of four.

The interval between her crawling and her dancing years was very brief. Perhaps it would have been just as brief in Portsmouth. And suppose she had danced there, too——?

But in New York. . . . At the age of fifteen she made her first appearance on the stage; and in the Ziegfeld Follies, if you please. And she was soon known as the Nell Brinkley Girl, for she inspired the type of girl made popular by Nell Brinkley in her drawings at that time.

Furthermore, her dancing in one of New York's greatest dancing eras was considered nothing short of remarkable, and after scoring an individual dancing success in "Her Little Highness," a musical comedy into which she had graduated, she became the guiding spirit of New York's most brilliant dance-and-dine palaces. Mae Murray's San Souci and Follies Marigny on Broadway were second in distinction only to the dancing rooms of royal palaces.

At the height of the dance fever Miss Murray sought to develop herself in yet another medium. She saw the possibilities of the screen. Her first opportunity came in 1915 during a return starring engagement in the Follies. In that production one of the novelties was a short motion picture interlude. The audience found itself gazing at another audience on the screen. Down the aisle of this screen theatre came Mae Murray and ascended to the stage. The screen was then raised, and there was Miss Murray in person on the regular stage of the New Amsterdam Theatre. This, although not in the photoplay class, served to identify Miss Murray with the silversheet. Her skillful pantomime in this brief film display led to many motion picture offers.

Miss Murray's first picture was "To Have and to Hold." Then followed "The Dream Girl" and "The Primrose Ring." "A Mormon Maid" was one of her conspicuous successes, after which she was starred in "The Bride's Awakening," "What Am I Bid?" "The Delicious Little Devil" and "Modern Love." Next she was seen in "Twin Pawns" and "The A B C of Love." Starring roles in "On With the Dance," "The Right to Love," "Idols of Clay" and "The Gilded Lily" followed.

Later she became associated with an independent company, in which she was believed to be financially interested with Robert Z. Leonard. The photoplays produced under these auspices proved to be great successes. First came "Peacock Alley," then "Fascination;" third was "Broadway Rose."

"Jazzmania" and "The French Doll" were subsequent successes—And now she is little Sally O'Hara, star dancer of the "Manhattan Follies" who later becomes the Merry Widow in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's picturization of "The Merry Widow."

JOHN GILBERT

"Prince Danilo"

AS soon as the announcement was made that Erich von Stroheim would direct "The Merry Widow" for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer with Mae Murray in the title role, the topic of greatest discussion around the studios was the choice of an actor to play 'Danilo.' Newspapers and public alike showed unusual interest in the selection of the actor for the role, and discussion reached almost a fever heat among the fans who remembered Donald Brian as 'Danilo' in the stage version of the famous operetta.

The requirements of the part were unusually varied: The actor selected must have distinguished bearing, and at the same time give the impression of real democracy although of royal blood. He must have a personality certain to win audience sympathy, even though he is the epitome of suave deviltry. He must make the onlooker feel that he is captivating the characters with whom he comes in conflict. He must have an assured manner and finesse. He must be a gallant. He must dance divinely. And of course he must be a sterling actor.

This was hardly an easy order to fill. Practically every leading man in the industry was discussed for the part, and most of them would have given a year's salary for the opportunity to play the coveted role. After combing the entire field, von Stroheim and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer executives selected John Gilbert as the actor most fitted for the part, and he has more than justified their confidence in his ability. The role would have been a shining gem in any actor's crown without the distinction of von Stroheim's direction, and with this added asset, Gilbert will probably double his fast growing popularity with the portrayal.

John Gilbert was born in Logan, Utah. In his early teens he toured the northwest with Eddie Foy's comedy company. Following that he played juvenile roles with sundry stock companies. But in the interest of an education he abandoned acting and entered the Hitchcock Military Academy at San Rafael, California.

He is not without apprenticeship as an extra, from the ranks of which he graduated into the once flourishing Inceville. And though he is only acting now, he has had the wide experiences of scenario writing and picture making. He has even directed and acted in his own productions.

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¶ *Mae Murray and John Gilbert in a love scene from the tale of the Prince who loved a dancer.*

¶ *Mae Murray as Sally O'Hara, star dancer of the "Manhattan Follies," performs at the Royal Theatre of Monteblanco.*

¶ *The erstwhile dancer and the heartbroken Danilo meet again at a high social function in Paris, where she is now famous as the Merry Widow.*

¶ *The Merry Widow and Prince Danilo about to begin their sensational waltz.*

"I Was An Extra Once"

"Will you shave your hair off? . . ."
"Can you play a musical instrument? . . ."
"Have you had military experience? . . ."

After each question, delivered in a high-pitched, business-like tone, the wiry fellow who stood in the doorway of Erich von Stroheim's private office at the Metro-Goldwyn-

Erich Von Stroheim

Mayer studio appraised the galaxy of faces and forms that mobbed the grassy areaway between the two long, low white buildings.

The wiry fellow was the assistant director. His voice had quite awakened the crowd. Every eye was fixed on him.

He moved down into the mob, and became lost in it. Occasionally, he could be made out, writing a name on a broad yellow pad or answering a question. Men and women and youths and girls closed in on him, hemmed him in, leaned over his shoulder.

Approaching closer, one might have noticed a piquant nose beneath a brimming lilac hat. A question was being asked in a murmurous tone. "No, young lady," he replied, with a gentle finality, and the piquant nose receded, a fragment of profile, behind the voluminous hat.

Finally, the a. d. elbowed his way back to the office door, entered, slammed the door shut; and the crowd, most of whom had waited for a possible role in "The Merry Widow" since early morning, seemed to relax.

It must have been about 3 in the afternoon when the slow procession of applicants into one doorway and out the other—interviewed, hired, rejected or considered—was brought to a sudden pause. Again the mob began to weld together, amid excited undertones; and faces, alert or intense, fastened eyes upon a hatless man in a jaunty light blue top coat who was twirling a handsome amber walking stick.

It was von Stroheim, who stood in the doorway as if he'd been suddenly materialized! He was talking in a low, mellow tone. Two girls behind me in the mob were whispering. One voice said: "Miriam, he spoke to me in the cafeteria today. . . . I didn't think Mr. von Stroheim would remember me . . . of course, I worked for him two years ago on a ballroom set in 'Foolish Wives.' . ."

As the girls subsided, von Stroheim's voice became audible. The accent of the voice, like his face, was unmistakably Germanic. Like a figure of Fate with humanity swirling at his feet, he stood there and talked, telling them, in a voice charged with overtones of suggestion and implication, of the characters he needed to complete his cast. His eyes which in the late afternoon loomed like roaring furnaces at times, would widen with the wonder of the connoiseur as he beckoned to some man or woman far back in the mob, and asked the favored one to step inside.

Lithe, sleek, violent-blooded, he showed himself nevertheless capable of nuance, of fastidious grimaces and gestures as he explained roles to a gamut of varying types. He exchanged pleasantries with a little Irishman in a dark baggy suit. He joked broadly with a huge negro with a jutting boulder of a jaw, after selecting him for the role of George Washington White. With girls, he inevitably twitted them on some resemblance to a green star, with a ticklish, challenging humor.

It was "No, not you! I want that silent girl way back there . . . ah, fine. . . . You a muscian? . . . young fellow, once you agree to shave your hair, remember, it'll be too late to change your mind. . . . Now, who would like to be peasant wenches? We can use two more. . . . And I want someone for an inn-keeper's wife. . . . No, my dear girl, you don't look wild enough for my wild party scene . . . you've worked in wild party scenes before? Well, my wild party is going to be wild!" He stared at her as if he wanted her to know she would be playing with thunder and madness and splashing in lakes of fiery wine. The girl, a despairingly beautiful brunette in a chic dark hat—a sort of countess out of an E. Phillips Oppenheim novel—shrank meaningly. "Oh, I can see you're afraid! All right, you're hired. I want you to be afraid," he laughed warmly. Her eyes, like wet violets, smiled whimsical thanks.

It was growing quite dark, von Stroheim lifted his right hand, glared disappointedly at his wrist-watch. "Friends," he began, "I have to go. Several hours of work ahead for me in the wardrobe department. Will you have patience with me? I know many of you have waited all day. Well, so have I, and yesterday I worked from nine in the morning till three this morning. My wife gave me the very blazes when I got home! You see, I'd had neither lunch nor dinner—just like many of you. But tomorrow's another day. Don't forget, I was an *extra* once—and not so many years ago!"

In dispersing, nearly everyone in that crowd who had waited all day smiled. He made each one feel that he or she might be a Deity some day. For hadn't "von" said:

"Don't forget, I was an extra once!"

"The Merry Widow"

THE languorous, almost somnolent quietude of the little Kingdom of Monteblanco in the Balkans is suddenly roused to feverish excitement and festivity by the return of its army from manoeuvres.

Happy faces distinguish the troops that trail into the capital after Prince Danilo from those that follow tremulously in the path of his cousin, the Crown Prince.

The little army soon disbands and the soldiers return to their homes and families, while the officers of the Crown fill every nook of the only Inn in the town and prepare to celebrate their homecoming in the accepted custom, with much drinking and feasting.

Into the midst of all this merry-making troups little Sally O'Hara, the star dancer of the "Manhattan Follies," an itinerant theatrical company from New York. In quest of accommodations during their stay in town, Flo Epstein, manager of the "Manhattan Follies," leads his band of players to the Inn. There the theatrical manager seeks to make his wants known to the innkeeper, who has difficulty understanding English.

Faced with the inconvenience and hardship of having to spend the night outdoors, Sally then attempts to convey to him that they want quarters. Language failing to be articulate, Sally desperately tries pantomime.

Sally is engaged in some wild gesticulations, and the innkeeper seems equally expressive with his hands, when Prince Danilo enters upon the scene. He sees Sally's plight instantly and, after informing her that he speaks English, volunteers his services as interpreter. After a brief conference with the innkeeper, Danilo apologetically makes it known to Sally that the entire Inn is filled with officers. Sally accepts the news almost tearfully. There is no place for them to go—and they have to eat and sleep.

As the tears well up in Sally's eyes Prince Danilo's sympathy goes out to her; he is obviously smitten with the little minx, though he refuses to admit as much to himself. Rather than see her cry, he gallantly offers her the use of his room during her stay, but first taking the precaution of admonishing the innkeeper not to reveal his identity.

Through it all the Crown Prince has stood in a corner nearby and watched the procedure with diabolical interest, his attention centered on Sally. Not to be outdone by his cousin Danilo, he approaches and suavely offers to install Sally in his room if she will accept. Sally accepts the Crown Prince's rooms—for the other girls in the company. But she herself prefers to dispossess Danilo from his quarters.

Professional entertainment during their merry-making is a welcome compliment to the officers, and thus it came about that Sally and her "Manhattan Follies" enjoyed a longer run than they had expected in the capital of Monteblanco.

During Sally's stay the rivalry for her favor between Danilo and the Crown Prince is augmented by Baron Sadoja, a sensuous old roue whose wealth is the power behind the kingdom. Danilo, however, scores the first triumph over both and succeeds in taking Sally to dinner after one of the shows.

In order to humiliate his cousin Danilo, the Crown Prince breaks into their private dining room that evening and finds him with Sally in what appears to be a compromising situation. Not to be undone by the Crown Prince's vindictiveness, and to save Sally's reputation, Danilo announces that Sally has consented to marry him. For Danilo has since discovered himself to be desperately in love with her, and Sally believes in his sincerity.

When the Crown Prince has cynically retreated from the room with his revellers, Danilo proposes marriage to Sally, who confesses her love for him by accepting. They decide to marry the very next day, before the Crown Prince and his accomplices have had an opportunity to create gossip.

But the malicious Crown Prince has been quick to relay the news to the King and Queen. The next morning Danilo is forced by them to break off the engagement; for Baron Sadoja, concealing his own sensuous love for Sally, threatens to withdraw his support of the Kingdom if Danilo enters into an alliance with the "little dancer."

Upper Left:
Prince Danilo confesses his love to Sally.
Lower Left:
Prince Danilo dissipates the night before the duel.

Upper Right:
Sally attends the wounded Danilo.
Lower Right:
The Queen guards Danilo's door.

The sardonic Crown Prince is forthwith dispatched to break the tragic news to Sally. With the bitterness of failure he offers her fifty thousand francs for her "kindnesses" to Danilo and orders her to leave the country at once. Sally refuses his money, and neither will she accept his orders as the wishes of Danilo. Hysterically denouncing him as a scheming scoundrel, she threatens to go to Danilo herself. But the timely entrance of Baron Sadoja, who lies along with the Crown Prince and withholds the real truth of Danilo's failure to keep his promise, temporarily convinces Sally that she has been deserted.

The Crown Prince goes; and left alone with the sorrowing Sally, Baron Sadoja pleads his case anew. He reasons with her that as the Baroness Sadoja she will actually be the first lady of the land, and as such the royal family will be compelled to accept her. Scorned and broken-hearted, and now resolved to spite her oppressors, Sally consents to enter into a loveless marriage with the Baron, whose very sight revolts her.

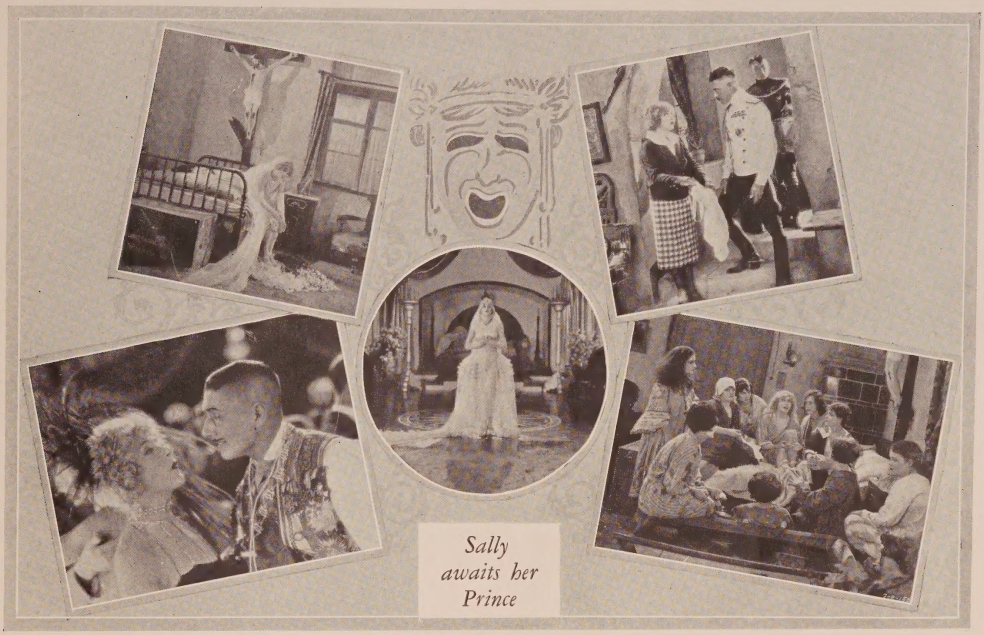
Though the marriage of Sally and Baron Sadoja is performed ecclesiastically, the hand of a benign Providence prevents its consummation. On the wedding night, the old and diseased Baron is stricken with paralysis, and after lingering for many days finally dies. As his widow and only heir, the Baron's entire fortune is assigned to Sally.

Thus Sally's position is immediately changed from that of a second-rate dancer to the richest woman in the Kingdom. With her hold on the Sadoja fortune she succeeds the Baron as the real ruler of Montblanco!

She soon transfers her home to Paris, and the horror of seeing the Sadoja millions going out of the country creates a panic in the royal household. That the only support of the Kingdom will be dissipated becomes especially imminent to the King and Queen when it is subsequently reported to them that Sally is known to all of Paris as the "merry widow."

The King and Queen cunningly suggest to Danilo that he may now go in pursuit of the love which they once denied him, but Danilo refuses to attempt to win her again for fear she will think him a fortune hunter.

As a last resort the King and Queen send the Crown



Upper Left:
The deserted bride.
Lower Left:
The Merry Widow and the Crown Prince.

Upper Right:
Sally the dancer and Prince Danilo meet.
Lower Right:
Sally and the "Manhattan Follies" chorus.

Prince to Paris on a mission to marry her as a means of bringing the fortune back to Monteblanco. Danilo secretly follows him to prevent it, but when he perceives that his cousin is handsomely received by Sally while he himself is flagrantly rebuked as a lover who kisses and runs away, he gives himself over to a life of dissipation.

In his great disappointment Danilo gives a sorrowful exhibition of himself. He is found recovering from one of his drunken stupors by Sally and his cousin, who are out riding together. To punish him for his seeming lack of manhood, Sally announces that she has become engaged to the Crown Prince, and when the latter insinuates that *he* will not leave the bride waiting at the church, Danilo knocks him down and is promptly challenged by his cousin to a duel.

Aware of the fact that Danilo is spending the night before the duel in drinking, Sally seeks him out in one of the cabarets. She attempts to dissuade him from his purpose, and Danilo mistakes it for a frantic plea to save the man she wishes to marry, the man she really loves. Danilo, however, is adamant and refuses to withdraw.

On the field of honor the next morning, the seconds meet and retire to await the outcome. Danilo and his cousin the Crown Prince are given orders to fire their pistols between the counts of one and three. While the Crown Prince aims, Danilo, thinking to spare his cousin for Sally's sake, discharges his pistol into the air. The Crown Prince, a deadly marksman, fires regardless and dangerously wounds Danilo.

During Danilo's convalescence, throughout which he is constantly attended by Sally (who now knows why he was forced to abandon her) the King dies and the Crown Prince returns to Monteblanco to succeed him as ruler.

In the midst of the funeral procession the Crown Prince is assassinated by a demented old beggar whom he had brutally assaulted in one of his drunken fits.

Danilo, next in the regal line, inherits the throne. He returns to Monteblanco with Sally, and soon afterward both march down the church aisle to the music of the coronation and wedding marches.

Roy D'Arcy

ROY D'ARCY, a newcomer to the screen and a "find" of Erich von Stroheim, plays his first screen role in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production of "The Merry Widow."

Though born in San Francisco, D'Arcy received a major portion of his University training on the Continent—in Berlin, Leipsic, Vienna, and Paris. Among other things he studied voice and made his first appearance on the stage as the tenor of a student revue in Germany.

Leaving college, he spent considerable time in South America, ranching and accompanying expeditions into the Brazilian Jungles. When he returned to the United States he decided to make the stage his profession, and joined the "Oh Boy" musical comedy company. After that he appeared in several New York productions. Six months ago he went to Los Angeles, where he appeared with Peggy Wood in "The Clinging Vine." Von Stroheim and his wife were attending the performance, and upon seeing D'Arcy, the director realized that he had found the "Crown Prince" of his picture. A meeting was arranged, camera tests made, and D'Arcy is now on his way to screen fame as a most engaging villain.

Josephine Crowell

JOSEPHINE CROWELL was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was educated in Boston, and joined a road company playing "Hearts of Oak" with James Herne. She became quite a figure in theatricals, featuring in productions with Frank Keenan, Robert Hillyard and Harrison Fiske; in Klaw & Erlanger productions, in the "County Fair," and "York State Folks."

She started work in pictures at the old Reliance Studio in New York about thirteen years ago, later joining D. W. Griffith, with whom she remained for 5 years. During this time she played in "The Birth of a Nation," "Intolerance," "Hearts of the World," and "The Greatest Question."

Miss Crowell makes her first appearance under Erich von Stroheim's direction in his Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production of "The Merry Widow." She plays the Queen of Monteblanco, and is quite a contradiction of the ordinary, garden variety of Queen. Her "Queen Milena" is a shrew who completely dominates the King and his little monarchy.

TULLY MARSHALL

THE proverbial bottom rung of the ladder was the starting point of Tully Marshall, and during his thirty-six years of theatrical experience in the United States and Europe he has been call boy, property man, stage manager, director, managing director, producer, juvenile actor, leading man and star. "The City," "The Trap" and "Paid in Full" are a few of his stage successes.

Small wonder, then, that he gives such an expert performance as Baron Sadoja in "The Merry Widow."

His entry into the movies was achieved through the screening of his old stage play, "Paid in Full." Since then Griffith, Fine Arts, Goldwyn, Ince and Louis B. Mayer, in turn, have put his ability to good use.

Mr. Marshall was born in Nevada City, California, and educated at the University of Santa Clara.

BORN in Virginia, and educated at the University of Virginia, George Fawcett had an extensive theatrical career in the United States and England before becoming associated with the screen. Universal, Fine Arts, Selig, Select, Selznick, Artcraft, Griffith and First National have given Fawcett important roles in numerous productions because of his remarkable characterizations. Among the many successful pictures in which he has appeared are: "Sentimental Tommy," "The Old Homestead," "Java Head," "Silas Marner," "Manslaughter" and "Tess of the D'Urbervilles."

He was directing pictures when called upon to portray the King in "The Merry Widow." Out of a love for "The Merry Widow" which we all share, he temporarily abandoned the megaphone.

GEORGE FAWCETT

Collaborator, Scenario and von Stroheim

By BENJAMIN GLAZER

Noted author, translator, and scenario collaborator with Erich von Stroheim on "The Merry Widow"

WHEN we began the scenario for "The Merry Widow" for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Erich von Stroheim confided to me that he had never had a collaborator. When it was finished I understood why. No writer could keep up with him—and live.

I stopped trying after the first day. Fortunately for me, I have a talent for indolence which matches his wholly unnatural passion for labor. Modest little ideas grew into sturdy episodes and expanded into sequences of epochal length. A slender, seemingly artificial musical-comedy plot took root in reality and blossomed into a sturdy drama. Heaps upon heaps of manuscript accumulated. Scenes multiplied into thousands. Secretaries almost fainted from exhaustion. And art directors' eyes gave out. But von Stroheim worked on, energetic as an ant, tireless as a horse. And I slept peacefully.

When you see "The Merry Widow" on the screen you will notice episode after episode done swiftly, briefly, impressionistically. But don't be deceived. Beneath what is there accomplished in a few significant vignettes and a few phantom-like dissolves, lies a solid and elaborate scaffolding. When von Stroheim has chosen to show you merely a muffled drum you may be sure that first he planned and painstakingly worked out the entire funeral procession which it symbolizes.

He refuses every short cut. He leaves nothing to chance. Though open-minded as a child in discussion of general ideas of plot-structure and character-development he is pedantic as a professor when it comes to detail. That is his own particular responsibility, and he regards it with all solemnity. He literally directs his pictures as he writes them.

The co-author of a very successful play once told an interviewer: "The secret of every collaboration is that one collaborator does all the work."

"Which did the work in your case?" the interviewer asked him.

"Ah," he replied, "that is the secret."

But there is no secret in our case. I frankly acknowledge that von Stroheim did the work. If he received any inspiration or ambition from me at all, it must have been from my indolence!

AND WHAT'S MORE —

Praise from the Press

"'THE MERRY WIDOW,' as acted by Miss Murray and Mr. Gilbert, provides a screen play which is pictorially brilliant. . . . I don't think I have ever seen more delightful photographic effects. . . . They have spared no time nor expense, it would seem, in constructing realistic settings into which to cast this grand old music-play. . . . By all means go and see this motion picture, because it is a generally handsome exhibit.

"The fact, however, that one forgot all about the temperature when the picture was unreeling before one's eyes proved what needs no proving—that Erich von Stroheim's pictures are peerless pictures. . . . If one touched on all the fine points of 'The Merry Widow' one could write columns about it. . . . We are just going to end with: 'If you miss it you deserve to.'"—*Harriette Underhill, Herald-Tribune.*

"This picture is one of strong passions, and it is in many respects ably directed. . . . The Widow is, of course, impersonated by Mae Murray, who demonstrates true acting ability in this effort. . . . And the closing scenes made in color are beautiful."—*F. W. Mordaunt Hall. N. Y. Times.*

"What a picture! . . . As Sally O'Hara the Manhattan Follies girl who later becomes a queen—Miss Murray is enchanting. . . . Franz Lehar's light opera, 'The Merry Widow,' not only provides a delightful musical score . . . but it provides some stirring love scenes. Jack Gilbert is handsome, sure of himself and a fine actor. . . . 'The Merry Widow,' the most delightful light opera of yesterday, has become the most finished motion picture of to-day. Anyone with a spark of romance will adore the love scenes and those with a yen for color and atmosphere will find that von Stroheim knows exactly how it should be applied."—*Louella O. Parsons, N. Y. American.*

"Had I a hat on I'd take it off to Erich von Stroheim for the delightful picture he made of 'The Merry Widow.' . . . The typical von Stroheim directorial touches are fascinatingly deft, and the settings, the costumes and the royal customs are splendid. The music, which consists of selections from Franz Lehar's score for the operetta, is an added delight to the photoplay, which is so well acted, directed, so colorful and so brilliant. And one can ask no more."—*Rose Pelswick, Evening Journal.*

"'The Merry Widow' scimmed across the screen of the new Embassy theatre last night a smart and glittering transcription of the Franz Lehar musical comedy. . . . Jack Gilbert is absolutely fascinating as the gay Prince Danilo. . . . Even the men admit Jack is there!"—*Mildred Spain, Daily News.*

"'The Merry Widow,' which opened last night for an extended run in the new Embassy Theatre, is a positive gem. It is by far one of the best things seen on a Broadway screen in months. . . . And will prove one of the sensations of the season. . . . Throughout, the picture is simply crammed with beauty, and its climax, which is done in natural colors, is positively gorgeous. . . . Probably no male screen luminary could have carried off this picture as did John Gilbert. The man was simply great throughout. . . . 'The Merry Widow' is in for several months of unprecedented success, and those who saw it last night certainly wish it all that."—*George Gerhard, Evening World.*

"The most notable event of the current cinema year occurred last night. . . . 'The Merry Widow' is a gem. . . . This production unfolds with beautiful precision, artful subtlety and magnificent sets. Mae Murray and John Gilbert cover themselves with glory as hero and heroine of this rich romance. . . . Unique in its beauty, to say the least."—*Dorothy Herzog, The Mirror.*

"'The Merry Widow' is von Stroheim at his best. In point of artistry, directing, acting and photography nothing better has ever been seen on Broadway. As an operetta, 'The Merry Widow' was extremely popular; as a motion picture, it is a sensation! . . . Always a splendid actor, as Prince Danilo, Mr. Gilbert has reached the heights and brought them down with him, so that from henceforth he need fear no rival. . . . 'The Merry Widow' offers an evening's entertainment that will live long in your memory. Like the catch-line of the famous advertisement, "It's good to the last drop.'"—*Regina Cannon, The Graphic.*

"Erich von Stroheim's production of 'The Merry Widow' is in almost all respects a captivating picture, fraught with the exquisite beauty of a new Mae Murray. . . . For it is a picture with an appeal to the mind; a thing done with sophistication, poise and intelligence. . . . It is altogether directed with genius and—is excellent entertainment."—*The Sun.*

"It provides unusually pleasant entertainment with that touch of sophistication which von Stroheim always manages to give to his stories. . . . John Gilbert and Mae Murray perform their version of the famous waltz in splendid style, and the entire film is notable for many strikingly artistic and beautiful scenes. The coronation scene at the end of the picture, in color, is particularly effective, and the audience last night was moved to applaud during the entire sequence. . . . 'The Merry Widow' is unusually well-rounded entertainment, far above the average movie fare."—*The Evening Post.*

"Directed by Erich von Stroheim, featuring Mae Murray and Jack Gilbert, it is a predestined success. It will probably be rated as von Stroheim's most entertaining picture and surely his most successful. It has more thoroughly universal appeal than anything he has ever done. . . . Mae Murray is a revelation in the title role. Her grace will delight you. Jack Gilbert, though he appears with a shaved head, has lost none of his fiery appeal. He's a corking Danilo."—*Delight Evans, The Telegraph.*

"The Merry Widow"

Two Queens and a Jack

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